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SUBJECT: BOUCHER AND KASURI COVER F-16S, JIRGAS, NORTH
WAZIRISTAN AGREEMENT AND FENCING THE BORDER

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: On November 6, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher met with Foreign Minister Kasuri. In the meeting, Kasuri asked for consideration on F-16 payments and previewed Pakistani thoughts on the joint jirgas announced after President Musharraf and President Karzai met in Washington. Kasuri expressed frustration over Pakistan's being blamed for problems in Afghanistan and explained Pakistan was committed to making the jirgas a success. Each side had a different vision, and Assistant Secretary Boucher recommended that the two sides talk soon to find common ground. Kasuri asked for the U.S. assessment on the North Waziristan Agency agreement and also explained Pakistan's intent to fence part of the border and possibly use mines, which Boucher cautioned against. End Summary.

12. (U) On November 6, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher called on Pakistani Foreign Minister Mian Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri. U.S. participants included Ambassador Crocker, South and Central Asian Affairs Executive Assistant Caitlin Hayden, and Embassy notetaker. Government of Pakistan participants included Director General of the Foreign Minister's Office Khalid Mehmood, , Additional Secretary for Americas Shahid Kamal, and Director General for Americas Sohail Mahmood.

13. (C) Foreign Minister Kasuri opened by discussing the recently-signed Letter of Agreement to purchase 18 new F-16s. Kasuri asked that terms be changed to allow the Government of Pakistan to pay for the aircraft upon delivery. If that was not possible, the Government of Pakistan wished to back-load the payment schedule, so that most of the payments would not be due until nearer the delivery date. Additionally, the Government of Pakistan would be grateful for assistance securing a commercial loan and, if a commercial loan were not available, then some type of U.S. Government guarantees. The Government of Pakistan also wanted a promise of a full refund if the project were canceled for

some reason. Ambassador Crocker replied the U.S. was studying the possibility of back-loading payments within limits, subject to Lockheed-Martin's cash-flow requirements.

Parallel Jirgas

14. (C) Foreign Minister Kasuri reported that Afghan Foreign Minister Spanta had telephoned to ask for a bilateral meeting in November to discuss the parallel jirgas. Due to other commitments, early December was the best Kasuri could do. Before meeting with Spanta, Kasuri wanted to meet with "all the key stakeholders" in the jirga process. Stressing the need for a successful enterprise, Kasuri said a jirga failure "would be a disaster, because there would be no hope left." He said President Musharraf's plan to strengthen the tribal system should theoretically work, but money and development assistance would be the key.

15. (C) Kasuri strongly believed jirga participation should be limited to Pashtuns. He hypothesized that President Karzai might be under political pressure to include non-Pashtuns, but Kasuri worried that non-Pashtun participation would change the character of the meeting. "Afghanistan's problem is with the Pashtuns. The jirga should not become a second National Assembly." Assistant Secretary Boucher suggested that, while deciding

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participation and geographic scope, Kasuri and Spanta could consider inviting non-Pashtuns as observers or guests.

16. (C) Kasuri did not want the United States to misunderstand Pakistan's insistence on limiting jirga

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participation to Pashtuns. He said the Government of Pakistan also wanted to increase contacts with non-Pashtuns in Afghanistan, especially those associated with the former Northern Alliance. For example, Pakistan hoped to increase bilateral interaction with Speaker of the Afghan Assembly Yunus Qanooni, who led the Northern Alliance Delegation at the Bonn talks.

17. (C) Boucher encouraged the two Foreign Ministers to establish a jirga timeline and to discuss third party assistance or participation. He knew the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan was involved. He offered that the U.S. was ready to help and looked to the Afghans and Pakistanis to tell us how we might support them. Additionally, Pakistan and Afghanistan should decide on desired outcomes and should consider having Pakistan's jirga point-man, Northwest Frontier Province Governor Orakzai, meet with his Afghan jirga counterpart before the foreign ministers met.

Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

18. (C) Kasuri said a Taliban victory in Afghanistan would be "a disaster for Pakistan. It would strengthen extremist Pashtuns." He continued by observing that failure to defeat the Taliban would "lead to trouble all of the Muslim world, but especially in Pakistan." Boucher replied that the United States believed the war in Afghanistan was "definitely winnable." Development and security projects were helping the situation. Boucher admitted that some people in the region questioned the United States' staying power, because the U.S. left Afghanistan after the Soviets pulled out. The United States was trying to prove through its budget commitments that the U.S. was committed to staying the course. The February NATO summit in Riga and the European Union's seven year budget for Afghanistan also would indicate

the Coalition's long-term intentions. Kasuri replied that extremists in Iraq and Afghanistan were claiming that the United States was fed up with wars and would pull out if the Democrats did well in the November 7 election. The Muslim world needed a signal that the United States remained committed to victory in Iraq. Boucher assured Kasuri that both political parties were committed to success in Afghanistan and Iraq and to assisting the tribal areas of Pakistan.

¶9. (C) Kasuri expressed annoyance with Western observers blaming Afghanistan's security problems on Pakistan. ("We are fed up with allegations against us.") He believed that fencing the border might lessen the criticism, as it would prove Afghanistan's problems were not because of cross-border infiltration. ("Afghanistan's problems are in Afghanistan, not in Pakistan.") Kasuri also noted that some people in the United States thought that Pakistan was "keeping the Taliban option open" in case the Taliban retook Afghanistan. He thought that fencing the border would prove Pakistan was not preparing to work with the Taliban in the future. He suggested initially fencing a 70 kilometer section that had been particularly problematic, then extending the fence later. He also suggested mining the border, though he noted "the Europeans" would be opposed to mines. Boucher replied that the U.S. military was skeptical on the efficacy of fencing the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Kasuri replied that the Indians had fenced their border with Pakistan. "They wouldn't have done it if it didn't help." Kasuri asked again if a fence might not be effective. "We thought your Bajaur operation was effective," replied Assistant Secretary Boucher.

¶10. (C) Kasuri said it "was ridiculous" to think that

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Mullah Omar might be hiding in Quetta. He also questioned news reports that attacks on Coalition forces near the Pakistan border had increased since the North Waziristan Agency jirga agreement. Kasuri said his advisors believed attacks had not increased and that tribal elders were working to enforce the agreement. He said the problem was that, since the North Waziristan Agency agreement covered only that agency's part of the border, the government needed to move ahead with other jirga agreements covering, for example, South Waziristan Agency and Bajaur Agency. Boucher replied that the United States so far believed the North Waziristan Agency agreement was not succeeding at lowering militant infiltration into Afghanistan but that it was still too early to tell. Ambassador Crocker explained that Coalition forces tracked a substantial increase in cross-border incidents between the June North Waziristan Agency cease-fire and the September 5 jirga agreement. Since then, attacks had remained at the same high level. Boucher noted it was important for Pakistan to maintain the ability to carry out military operations and to keep pressure on tribal leaders to fulfill their agreements.

¶11. (C) Assistant Secretary Boucher said that all the parties faced "two big problems" in Afghanistan. First, coalition partners had failed to provide the benefits of good governance -- roads, justice, police, development -- to many parts of Afghanistan. "We need to extend the benefits of good governance to them." Second, the Taliban were able to use Pakistan for sustenance. Even with fencing, Taliban would find a way to move back and forth across the border. "You need a comprehensive strategy on the tribal areas. Pakistan needs to extend the authority of the government into the border areas and provide a way for residents there to participate in the international economy. Fixing Pakistan won't fix Afghanistan, but we can't fix Afghanistan without fixing the problem on the Pakistan border."

¶12. (C) This cable was coordinated with SCA - Caitlin Hayden CROCKER